

## **Minutes of the meeting of St Mark's Church Council**

### **17 June 2014**

The meeting opened with the reading Evening Prayer.

#### **Apologies:**

George Burton, John Day, Wendy Evans-Wood, Janet Ibberson, Marion Prior, Wendy Rider, Mary Stubbs

#### **Minutes:**

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

#### **Leadership:**

- Discussions had taken place regarding children being more involved in the Sunday services. Wendy Waters reported that there had been some good feedback about the inclusion of children in Mothering Sunday service.
- The next Archdeacon's visitation is expected in July or August. However, we had still not received a response to the letter querying the accuracy and aspect of the 2013 review. It was agreed that this will be raised at this year's visitation.
- Arrangement had been made by Wendy Rider to cover for her absence while undergoing hospital treatment.
- The next Circuit meeting will take place on 19 June. It was reported that a volunteer was needed for the Circuit editorial team.
- The Garden of Remembrance register has been fully updated. Interments have increased this year.
- The Leadership Team had discussed the recent Pre School Ofsted inspection and the outcome. At the time of the meeting the inspection report had not been received. Covered further under the Pre School section.
- Open House continues to flourish. Foreign coins are be collected to raise funds and a donation of £250 had been received to support the cost of birthday cakes.
- Mick Ovenden and Jean Bank attended the Archdeacons visitation service at St Mary's Church on 4 June.
- The Partnership Leadership Teams will hold a social get together on the 19 August. Margaret Appleton has organised a trip on the John Bunyan river boat along the Great Ouse.
- The Partnership Quiz will be held on 1 November, this year at Putnoe Heights.
- Dates of specific service will be as follows:
  - Harvest Festival 5th October
  - Commemoration Service 2nd November. Speaker to be confirmed and possibly the doves.
  - Remembrance Sunday 9th November. Involve the children and incorporate 100 poppies.
  - Christmas tree delivery 29th November.
  - Christingle 7th December with gift service.
  - Carols in the Car Park 13th December, with Bedford Town Band.
  - Crib Service, Carols by Candlelight and Midnight Service 24th December
  - Christmas Morning 9.30 Service.
- The Leadership Team had discussed further the drawing up of a constitution, please see separate minute.
- It had been agreed that, being a public act of worship, baptisms would only take place during

services.

### **Centre Management:**

- A number of projects will commence during the quieter summer period, as follows: 4th August work begins on constructing the new porch. Also on 4th work will be carried out to fix the loose tiles in the foyer. It is anticipated the work will take four weeks. Alternative access arrangements will be in place during this time. 11th August all rooms and the staircase in the extension will be decorated.
- Two premises bookings have been lost since the last council meeting, due to lack of numbers. However, a new enquiry for a Pilates group is currently being discussed.
- An indoor bowls taster session is being arranged by Ray Seymour for July.
- The volunteer rota in the Church Office had been changed in March, following the retirement of Janet Day as a volunteer. Rose Beal, and Linda Parry have joined the rota. Janet will continue with all her other volunteer roles at St Mark's but Wendy wished to record her thank to Janet for all the support and help she had given over many years.

### **Pre-School:**

- A recent Ofsted spot visit had taken place and the inspection report had been received on the day of the Council meeting. The report had highlighted an earlier incident – which had been dealt with and policies corrected with hours. All staff had subsequently attended safeguarding training and read and signed the Safeguarding Policy.
- The report will be available to parents.
- Council Members felt that, although the incident should not have occurred, the report did not reflect all the excellent work done by Helen and the staff on a daily basis, which had been recognised by an outstanding Ofsted rating on previous inspections.
- Council members recorded their full support for Helen and the Preschool staff, and felt that areas of the report should be queried during the next Ofsted monitoring visit.
- Any queries should be referred to Charlie.
- An element of the report will mean that no central funding will be received until the monitoring visit has been and signed off.
- From September all places are full.
- Nicky Burkett, a member of the Preschool staff, will be taking up a position at Brickhill Lower School.
- Finances are all running well. Current balance is £64 926 (salaries equate to £11000 - £14 000 per month). The reserve account balance is £45 000.

### **Open House:**

- All is running very well but more volunteers are needed.
- The fund raising foreign coin collection has so far raised £65. A £250 donation had also been received.

### **Storybox:**

- Valerie Capon is currently standing for Jaana who is unable to work for the next few sessions. All is running well and Valerie was thanked for her continuing work with the young children and particularly in ensuring the continuity of the Thursday sessions..

### **Chat and Play:**

- There has been a change in staff recently. Jo had resigned but Janine has agreed to take on the organising role. Staff from Preschool are also helping during the changeover period. The staff change will be monitored by Jean Bank and Avril Williams on behalf of the Church Council.

**Junior Church/Messy Church:**

- All continues to work very well at Junior Church and thanks were again given to Jaana, Debbie and Val Capon for the work they do each Sunday.
- Messy Church also continues very well. May Dingwall had recently decided to stand down as a volunteer, but her place had been taken up by Sue Brown.
- Additional funding has been agreed by the Leadership Team.
- A youth worker from the Circuit had recently visited and was impressed with the work being done.
- The Messy Church is on 18 June and will include a picnic.
- It is planned that Messy Church will again be present at the Gathering on the Green and also at Celebrate 100 on August Bank Holiday.

**Pastoral Support:**

- The team are currently very busy but all contacts are being dealt with.
- Telecare continues to provide a very valuable service, and is co-ordinated by Wendy Waters.

**Garden of Remembrance:**

- All is running well. Interments/scatterings this year to date have been.
- Several wall plaques have been taken up and an interment in the columbarium.
- The account balance is £15 500.

**Woodland:**

- The consecration of the additional land by the Bishop of Bedford had taken place on 14 June. This had been an excellent occasion with 35 people attending.
- Linda advised members that there had been 220 burials / interments to date.
- Work was continuing well regarding the involvement of the Woodland in Celebrate 100.

**Missions:**

- Members had been given copies of St Mark's Mission Action Plan (MAP) summary report, which is to be returned to Bishop Alan. Sam ran through the report and asked members to advise him of any additional thoughts, views or questions they might have.
- Sam also asked members to let him have ideas for this year's Partnership Autumn Mission appeal. It was planned that this year would focus on local / UK projects.

**Circuit:**

- A review to gain feedback on the expanded Circuit, three years on, is to take place. Questionnaires will be available to all church members to complete, to seek their views on how it is working.
- Jane advised that Andrew Collins, our Circuit Superintendent, is to seek re-invitation for a further five years.

**Deanery:**

- Hannah Potter will be retiring during the summer and it was agreed that we support the £10 request from the Deanery to provide a thank you gift.
- Work is ongoing to involve all Churches within the Deanery to participate in Celebrate 100.
- The installation of Fr. Kevin will take place at St Paul's Bedford on 10 July.

**Finance:**

- Income and expenses are in line with the budget: the current account balance is £33 301.11, of which £13 000 is the quarterly Diocesan Quota payment to be made.

- Ian advised that he is enrolled on the new workplace pensions a seminar on 1 August. As an employer, St Mark's will have to have a scheme in place by 2016. E learning training will follow on from this.
- The Church auditor has suggested that St Mark's transfer onto a new finance accounting system. This would also involve the Churchyards accounts run by John Day. More details to follow when known.
- A salary review is under way for Preschool staff.
- Discussion then followed on the large amount of work that has been done to enable St Mark's to meet the necessary requirements of charitable status. The problems have surrounded the fact that, as a church partnership, we are governed under two separate bodies – The Methodist Church and the Church of England. Sam has recently worked, through the Diocese Legal Dept., to draw up a constitution that will recognise St Mark's and Putnoe Heights as Charitable Incorporated Organisations (C.I.O.).  
Once the work is completed, members of the Leadership Team will effectively become trustees of the C.I.O. Church Council will become members and Church Members will become beneficiaries. In practical terms the role of all these groups will be as now. Although this has been a lengthy process, being recognised as a C.I.O. will really be the only option of meeting our legal obligations and is now supported through the legal experts.
- It is envisaged that change to C.I.O. status will be by the end of the year.
- Copies of the constitution will be sent to Lee Colley and Andrew Collins.
- Sam was thanked for the hard work in bringing this matter nearer to a conclusion.

**Date of the next Church Council meeting:  
14.10.14.**

With no further business the meeting closed with The Grace.